

Dance of the Tumblers from *The Snow Maiden*

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov

transcribed by B. Walton O'Donnell

Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) was a Russian composer known for his affiliation with “The Five,” a circle of composers who promoted Russian art music that included Mily Balakirev, Alexander Borodin, Modest Mussorgsky, and César Cui. Before his music career blossomed, Rimsky-Korsakov was an officer in the Imperial Russian Navy and in 1862, during the American Civil War, sailed to the United States with ports of call in New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C. Even after turning to music and assuming a full time position at the St. Petersburg Conservatory, he remained in active service as inspector of naval bands throughout Russia. Many of Rimsky-Korsakov’s most successful symphonic works are still widely performed today, including *Capriccio Espagnol*, Russian Easter Overture, and *Scheherazade*. He also composed several operas that produced many memorable shorter works. His third opera, *The Snow Maiden*, premièred in 1882 and was based on a fairy tale which depicts the everlasting opposition of forces between King Frost (winter) and the Sun God (spring). From Act III, the fiery Dance of the Tumblers depicts the unique talents and boundless energy of the Russian *skomorokhi*, or street performers.